



HEALing Communities Study



GLHA
GREATER LOWELL HEALTH ALLIANCE

Low-cost Environmental Interventions to Reduce Overdose Deaths in Lowell:

Naloxboxes

The Proposal: The Greater Lowell Health Alliance has partnered with the NIH/NIDA HEALing Communities Study Lowell Coalition to purchase and install Naloxboxes at various accessible locations, throughout Lowell to decrease opioid-related overdose deaths. The boxes offer a secure location for community members to access Naloxone (i.e., Narcan® or Kloxado®), a potent antidote to opioid overdose that restores consciousness and breathing, saves lives, and prevents permanent injury.

What are Naloxboxes? A Naloxbox is a plexiglass box with a hinged door that Velcro's shut, which contains four kits of Naloxone and a barrier mask for rescue breaths. Each naloxone kit contains two doses.

Why install Naloxboxes? Installation of Naloxboxes in public locations, similar to an AED for heart attacks, is an evidence-based practice that increases access to a life-saving support. Layperson rescue with intranasal naloxone has a 98% success rate in a Massachusetts study¹. Naloxboxes were first introduced in Rhode Island and are now present in at least 13 other states, including Ottawa, Canada. Other Massachusetts communities that have installed Naloxboxes include [Cambridge](#), [Northampton](#), [East Bridgewater](#), Holyoke, Shirley, and Townsend.

Who Will Install & Maintain the Naloxboxes? Several private partners have already agreed to host Naloxboxes at their agencies, business, and community sites. If the city would like to participate, GLHA will work collaboratively with city officials to identify locations identify areas with high numbers of opioid overdoses for Naloxbox installation. Naloxboxes will be monitored and restocked regularly by GLHA and the Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution (OEND) coordinator.

Is it Safe for Bystanders to Administer Naloxone? Any person who administers naloxone is protected from liability under the Good Samaritan Law. All Naloxboxes include signage with photos of naloxone and steps to administer it and call for emergency help. Naloxone is safe and easy to administer. Naloxone is safe to use on anyone, and will not cause harm if it is misused. Even if naloxone expires

¹ Walley A, Xuan Z, Hackman HH, et al. Opioid overdose rates and implementation of overdose education and nasal naloxone distribution in Massachusetts: interrupted time series analysis. *BMJ*. 2013;346:f174.

(after two years), using it on someone who has possibly overdosed will not cause any adverse effects. Because Naloxone is only a temporary reversal of an overdose, all Naloxboxes also instruct any using naloxone to call 911. This is also important because, in some instances, a person who receives naloxone may experience feelings of withdrawal and experience confusion, and professional first responders can help.

Do Naloxboxes Dissuade People from Calling 911 in an Overdose Emergency? A [2014 study](#) found that Naloxboxes do not deter calls for first responders. Locally, in 2020-2021, 30% of the overdose related calls that Trinity EMS responded to in Lowell involved a bystander administering naloxone before the arrival of EMS. This is a testament to not only the value in having naloxone readily available for bystanders to use, but also that bystander administration of naloxone does not reduce the incidence of calling 911 after administration. Signage will highlight the critical importance of calling 911 regardless of administration of bystander naloxone.

Who Will Install and Maintain the Naloxboxes? The GLHA will collaborate with city officials and the Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution (OEND) coordinator to ensure the boxes are installed, stocked and maintained properly.

What If the Boxes are Tampered with? Using naloxone when an individual has not experienced an overdose has no negative effect on the body. To reduce the likelihood of damage, Naloxboxes can be installed at telephone poles, in stairwells, and other locations high enough off the ground so that young children cannot reach them. The potential of tampering should not impede access to life-saving medication for people who need it.

Does Increasing Access to Naloxone Increase Overdoses Because People Feel it is Safe to Use Substances? There is no evidence that access to naloxone increased substance use or overdose rates. While some overdoses are caused by the intentional ingestion of overdose-causing substances, like fentanyl, an increasing number of overdoses involve accidental ingestion through contamination. People who accidentally ingest fentanyl through substances they do not believe to be contaminated are less likely to have life-saving naloxone available, and therefore more likely to die from overdose. Increasing education and resources regarding overdose risk empowers people to limit their use of substances and reduce overall overdose rates.

Please reach out to Devon Goldberg (dgoldberg@greaterlowellhealthalliance.org) with any questions.